Pleurocoelus Trackway

Exhibit Hall Activity

Grades 9-12

Skills Practiced

Math

- Using standard units of metric measurement

Science

- Predicting
- Collecting data

Concepts Explored

- Dinosaur trackways

Sample Objective

Students will be able to predict the speed of a dinosaur by analyzing its trackway.

Background

In the early 1950s, Roland T. Bird, a paleontologist with the American Museum of Natural History, went to Texas in search of carnivorous dinosaur tracks; he found some in the Paluxy River. In addition to finding the carnivore tracks he was seeking, he also uncovered a sauropod track, the first track of its kind ever discovered. The dinosaur tracks he found were later identified as belonging to *Acrocanthosaurus* (a carnivore) and *Pleurocoelus* (a sauropod). Additional research has shown that these tracks are part of a trackway that shows a *Pleurocoelus* being attacked by an *Acrocanthosaurus*.

Materials

- metric measuring tape
- pencils
- clipboards
- calculators
- student worksheets

Teacher Preparation

1. It is recommended that your students do the Dinosaur Trackways activity included in this guide before visiting the Museum and doing this exhibit hall activity.
2. Divide your students into groups of four or five or keep the groups used during the Dinosaur Trackways activity.
3. Collect the materials listed above in the amounts needed to provide each group with one of each.
4. Answers calculated by student groups may vary due to differences in measuring techniques.

Activity

Before arriving at the Museum, discuss with your students the Paluxy River trackway and its significance. What information about dinosaur behavior have paleontologists been able to determine by studying the trackway?

When you arrive at the Museum, distribute required materials to the groups.

Have your students begin the activity by referring to the worksheet.

Extensions

Continue your students' investigation of dinosaurs by scheduling the Museum's distance learning program, *Dinosaurs*. For more information, contact Liz Baird, coordinator of distance learning, at 919.733.7450, ext. 621, or Liz.Baird@ncmail.net.